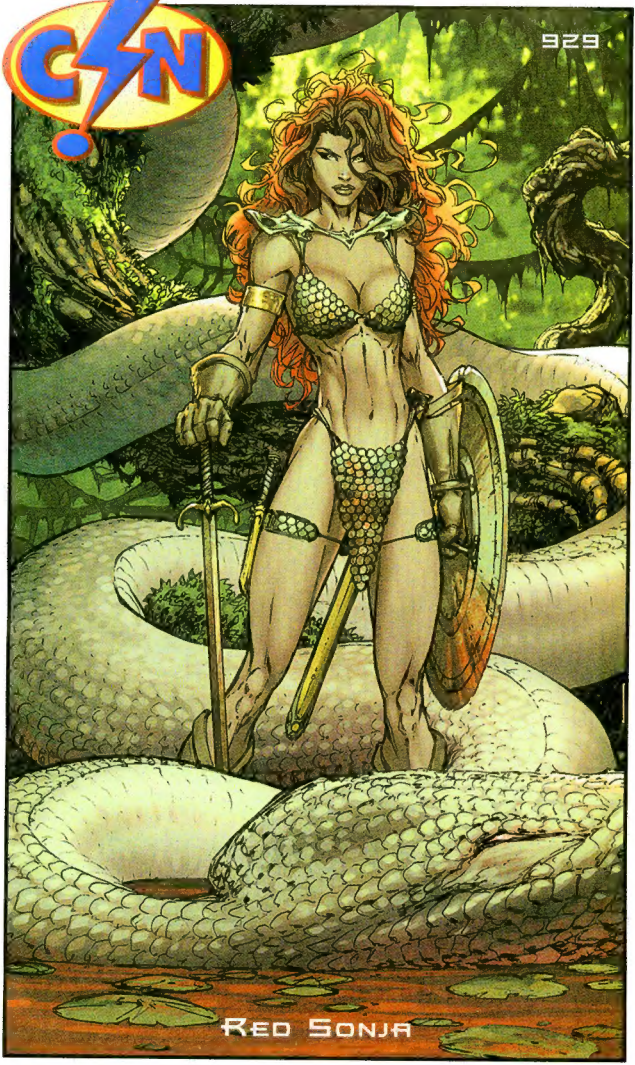
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RED SONJA

# Red Sonja 0, Dynamite 205,000

No, that's not the most lopsided sports score in recorded history: those are the amazing numbers that Dynamite Entertainment racked up for their special 25¢ ***Red Sonja #0***, a preview of their upcoming monthly ***Red Sonja*** ongoing series debuting in June.

"It is truly an achievement, especially considering the competition for April sales and all the choices that retailers had," Dynamite's J. Allen said. "Dynamite was fortunate enough to reach levels that have remained untouched in over ten years—***Red Sonja #0*** is the first non-Marvel/non-DC comic to achieve over 200,000 in initial sales."

Stratospheric sales like that put the special 25¢ issue of ***Red Sonja*** ahead of the bargain-priced promo issue sales of ***Conan***, ***Trigun***, and ***Hunter-Killer*** combined. Did the publishers or the creative team ever anticipate such strong support? And what do they suppose made the book such an amazing success?

"I've got to admit, I was completely taken aback," co-writer *Mike Carey* said. "But it's cool, we can deal. It's like, we thought we were doing a little chamber concert soiree kind of thing, and now we find we're playing Carnegie Hall. But it's okay, because we practiced!"

"Man, even if I had daydreamed about high numbers, I never would have thought up 205,000!" co-writer *Mike Avon Oeming* added.

"What made the book a success? I think it's what they call synchronicity," Carey said. "We've got a great team, and Dynamite got a great buzz going on the book. Everyone who's seen the artwork for the zero issue got really excited about it, and the word of mouth just took off. Plus, you know, it's *Sonja*! You want to get her mad at you?"

What many readers may not realize is that, when a publisher offers a full-color full-length comic at a bargain 25¢ price, the costs of production are enormous compared to the revenues from sales. "We actually lose money as a whole—especially factoring in the art/editorial and development costs in addition to the actual printing—but what we lose, we hope to make up in sales for future, full-priced issues," *J. Allen* said. "We're putting our best foot forward at a quarter and hope that so many fans try it out who would not have, that they then come back for more month in and month out. It's a marketing expense for us, but one where we have the potential to see real returns when our numbers for ***Red Sonja #1*** come back."

So what will ***Red Sonja #0*** deliver for that bargain price? "For a quarter, you're getting a complete tale—albeit a little shorter than a regular comic book that sells for over ten times the price—by the incredible creative team of *Mike Carey*, *Mike Oeming*, *Mel Rubi*, *Caesar Rodriguez*, *Richard Isanove*, and *Greg Land*. A tale that places you right in the middle of Sonja's world, gives you a taste and leaves you hungry for more and that's where #1 comes in," Allen said.

Allen also confirmed that ***Red Sonja #0*** "will be out in time for Free Comic Book day—and if retailers want to use it for that purpose, more power to them! We're comfortable that we're at a PG13 for the series, so it should be perfect for FCBD distribution."

One thing that helped boost orders for the book was the last-minute addition of a special ultra-limited "RRP Edition" of the book. (Since there's no Retail Representative Program for the RRP Edition to tie into—that's the DC program for which their ultra-limited RRP editions were created—Dynamite is calling this their Retail Reward Program, although you can also call this the Dynamite "Really Rare Printing" Edition.) Stores that ordered a thousand or more copies will receive one special RRP Edition as well. "Ultra-limited is the name of the game when it comes to the RRP edition and all future RRP Editions we do," Allen said. "You won't see it for sale from us—only from retailers that qualified. And I believe there will be less than two hundred copies of this edition made, in the world!"

One thing's for sure—the creative team doesn't have to worry about their efforts being overlooked! Writers *Mike Carey & Mike Avon Oeming* are already planning what they'll do to keep readers coming back month after month. " I believe we have about twenty issues planned out in overall arcs," Oeming said, "but with lots of room to expand, contract or go off on tangents if need be. In other words, we know where we are going."

"We've got some broad directions agreed upon," Carey added. "Part of the fun with a monthly book is knowing exactly where you're going, but not exactly how you're going to get there. The combination of planning and spontaneity seems to yield the richest results—for me, anyway."

How do the writers avoid the "wizard-and-monster-of-the-month" syndrome that so often befalls sword and sorcery comics?

"I think the answer to that lies in Sonja herself," Carey said. "We're going to be uncovering layers of her character, and layers of her past. We're going to learn how she thinks and what parameters she sets herself. That provides a kind of bedrock continuity."

"Because Sonja is such an interesting character, its really about her and how she reacts/interacts with her world more than what or whom she is fighting," Oeming added

"We're also building an arc that's heading in a definite direction—building towards a threat and a revelation that underlies all of the short-term obstacles that Sonja meets," Carey explained.

Another major selling point of the series is the art of *Mel Rubi*, a veteran illustrator with more than ten years experience to his credit. "In the early '90s I worked on The ***Punisher***, ***Dr. Strange*** and a few ***X-Men*** titles," Rubi said. "I also did a few books for Image like ***Deathblow***, ***Backlash***, and ***Grifter***. Then later I worked with Dark Horse on such titles as ***Alien vs. Predator***, ***Star Wars***, ***Angel***, and ***KISS***."

How'd Rubi come to be involved with ***Red Sonja?*** "I've always wanted to work on a fantasy book. And I was available at just the right moment when Dynamite needed an artist for ***Red Sonja***. So I tried out and I was picked from the rest."

What artists have particularly impressed and/or influenced Rubi in the past—and in particular, have any ***Sonja*** artists had an impact on him? "*Frank Miller* has always been my favorite," Rubi said. "Miller's art is very interesting to watch. It looks as if it is in motion. He would always foreshorten the figures and not too many artist like to go there, but I find that as a challenge. I also like what ***John Buscema*** did with Red Sonja in his ***Conan*** run. He makes her very graceful."

What does Rubi hope to bring to the book artistically? "I want you to feel like you are being in Sonja's world. I want to share the vision with everyone who looks at the book. It's more than words can explain."

Since Rubi's pencils are very tight and polished, "we aren't inking the book," the artist explained. "It's going straight from pencil art to colors, via *Caesar Rodriguez* and *Richard Isanove*." Even though he's having to turn out more finished art that traditional comics pencilling demands, "I can still produce about twenty-three pages a month," which means that maintaining a monthly schedule should be no problem for the artist, who is contracted to work on ***Red Sonja*** for a minimum of one year.

Rubi is having a great time with ***Sonja*** already. "I'm blown away by what both Mikes have prepared for me. I love what they are doing with this book." And there's no doubt as to what he finds both most enjoyable and most challenging. "The fact that the main character is a female," Rubi said. "I've never taken on anything like this before so this would be a challenge for me."

Illustrating a female lead figure is a unique experience for Rubi—but how unique is Sonja in her fictional world? Are there other warrior-women in this milieu—and if so, how does Sonja interact with them? "She's rare, but not absolutely unprecedented," Carey said. "There *are* other warrior women out there, and we'll be meeting at least one of them somewhere down the line. That's a long-term thing, though."

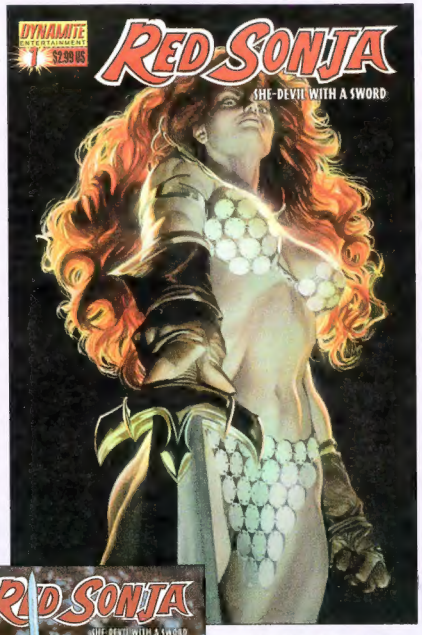
So what will Carey & Oeming do to keep those 205,000 readers coming back month after month? "Good characters, story, and art," Oeming said. "That's all a book really needs!"

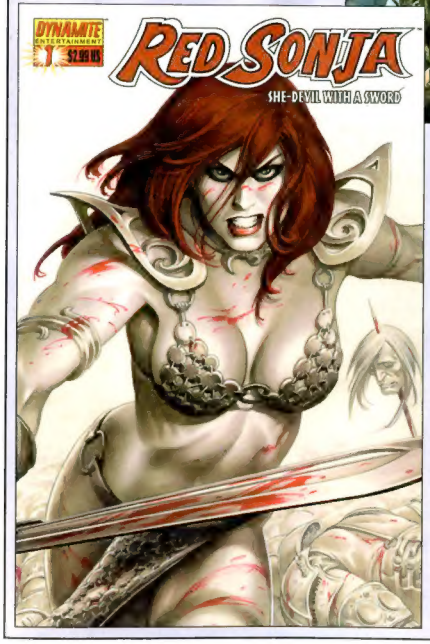
Just in case that isn't enough, though, "I'm thinking maybe something that involves kidnapping their grandmothers," Carey added, "but that may not be legal in some states. Failing that, I think what will bring them back is Sonja herself, so long as we succeed in bringing her and her world to life for a new generation of readers. That's the challenge we've set ourselves."

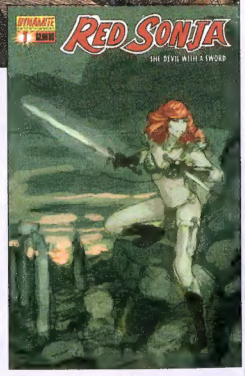
"I cant express what a great time writing ***Red Sonja*** has been," Oeming said in conclusion. "Working with *Mel Rubi* and *Mike Carey* has been an amazing experience, and any success the book has will just be icing on the cake."

***Red Sonja #0***, a special 25¢ comic, will ship with two different versions of its eye-catching *Greg Land* cover—one with a white background and one with a black background—in a 50/50 ratio. Look for it to reach comic shops in late April. The first issue of the monthly series follows in mid-June; ***Red Sonja #1***, a $2.99 comic, will be offered with five different covers featuring art by *Michael Turner*, *John Cassaday*, *Paolo Rivera*, *Joseph Michael Linsner*, and *Alex Ross*. Additionally, there will be a limited wraparound-cover edition featuring art by *Mel Rubi* that will be offered as a higher-priced collectible. And for completists, there are three different incentive covers: a 1:25 incentive featuring an *Art Adams* sketch cover; a 1:50 incentive featuring a *Joseph Michael Linsner* sketch with spot color cover; and the rarest of all, a 1:300 RRP edition featuring an *Alex Ross* cover. If you're interested, check with your friendly local retailer to determine price and availability.

BY CLIFF BIGGERS









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# Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *Matt Brady* and *newsarama.com*

## Watchmen Deserves the Absolute Best

One of the most acclaimed and influential books in the history of contemporary comics is about to get the upscale treatment it deserves: DC has announced that they will produce an ***Absolute Watchmen*** volume, produced with the full approval of creators *Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons*. This new edition will be fully recolored by original colorist *John Higgins* to take advantage of the larger upscale-format treatment.

***Absolute Watchmen*** will run a whopping 464 pages, and will be a complete reprinting not of the standard edition of the limited series but of the long-out-of-print Graphitti Designs edition from the late 1980s that includes forty-eight pages of additional material.

Gibbons, a fan of the ***Absolute*** oversized format that offers the highest possible quality artistic reproduction in a larger-sized slipcased edition, was thrilled to hear that ***Watchmen*** was getting this treatment. "As an artist, I love the ***Absolute*** books," Gibbons told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "The pages have much more impact at the large size and the production values are first rate. In fact, many of the foreign editions of ***Watchmen*** were done at this larger, album size, so I have a really good idea of how it will look already.

"The ***Absolute*** volume also gives us the chance to digitally remaster the coloring and correct a few mistakes that have always bugged us. We're not going to redraw or change the look of the book in any way; we'll just bring it closer to what we had in mind all those years ago.

"The coloring is being exactly reproduced from the regular edition, then original colorist *John Higgins* is tweaking the digital files before sending them to me for final approval. Back in the day, John lived a few miles away from me and would bring color guides over to discuss with me. Today, he lives a few miles from DC and is in close contact with them on technical matters, whilst thanks to the wonders of technology; I get daily pages for approval.

"Everything is looking really good, crisper and more vibrant than ever and it's great to be working with John again."

Gibbons won't be adding any new material for the upcoming edition, but he will be designing the package, giving it an authentic feel. "The material that has only so far appeared in the Graphitti hardcover edition will include many sketches, designs, the original pitch, script pages and an 'outro' by Alan and me. Most of the readers won't have seen this before."

Gibbons is pleased with the continuing popularity that ***Watchmen*** has enjoyed (the book has remained one of the field's best-selling collections, even though it is almost twenty years old. "All we ever set out to do was a comic book we'd like to read," Gibbons said. "It's gratifying to see that others continue to do so. I think it's become one of those books that are recommended reading for people just getting in to comics. The fact that it's self-contained is a bonus, since no previous knowledge of continuity is required and it has a clear resolution."

For the foreseeable future, ***Absolute Watchmen*** will be Gibbons' only involvement with the property, as he has nothing to do with the currently in-production film based on the comic. "I have no involvement, although it's being made close by in England. I'd be interested to see what they're doing but I don't know that they'd want me hanging around making suggestions any more than I'd have the time to do so!"

## Pulido's Keeping Horrifying Company

*Brian Pulido* created a splatter-punk dynasty of his own with comics like ***Evil Ernie*** and ***Lady Death***—but later this year, he's about to venture into the horror realm of others with a trilogy of comics based on some of the most guignolesque horror characters of them all.

This spring, Pulido will bring Freddy Krueger, Jason Vorhees, and Leatherface to Avatar Publishing in a trio of comics based on New Line Cinema's ***Nightmare on Elm Street, Friday the 13th,*** and ***The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.***

For a horror aficionado like Pulido, the assignment is a dream come true. "I get to tap into my splatter-punk roots and get all wet and gooshy," Pulido told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "I adore each of these characters. They are my heroes like Spider-Man or Superman are heroes to other fans. So yeah, it's a real dream come true and a terrific responsibility. Fans have great expectations."

While Pulido's horror credentials helped him land the writing assignment for all three books, he's not working in a vacuum. According to Pulido, New Line Cinema representatives "are approving the book every step of the way," ensuring that the comics remain true to the tone of the films.

Pulido offered a rundown on how the films will make their transition to comics. "Each book starts out with a full color one-shot, set to debut on Friday, May 13th, that dovetails into a three-part series for each character. I will be keeping to the recent continuity for each character, but as far as shared universe... you'll just have to read to find out.

"For ***Friday the 13th***, I see Jason as a supernatural Terminator. His potential for epic destruction is off the charts. Except for Freddy, I haven't seen him go up against 'victims' that provide a good fight. I'm going to remedy that... I plan to take Jason to new heights of depravity.

"For ***A Nightmare on Elm Street***, Freddy is the perfect, mean-spirited trickster. I'm a big fan of the first ***Nightmare*** as well as installments three and four. My stories will reflect the dark, violent mood of the first movie and the outlandish dream sequences of the third and fourth.

"Last but certainly not least, is ***The Texas Chainsaw Massacre***. It's easy to distance yourself from the violence in ***Friday the 13th*** and ***A Nightmare on Elm Street*** because Jason and Freddy are supernatural characters. In ***Chainsaw***, the Hewitt family are real. I felt like I needed a shower after writing the torture sequences."

Pulido is joined by veteran Avatar illustrators, with *Juan Jose Ryp* illustrating ***Nightmare***, *Mike Wolfer* illustrating ***Friday***, and *Jacen Burrows* illustrating ***Chainsaw*** – with *Greg Waller* coloring everything. How much interaction have you been having with the artists on these books? "It's been a cool process," Pulido said. "I whipped out short one-page story outlines and turned them in. I got great notes back from New Line, [Avatar publisher] *William Christensen*, *Mike Wolfer* and Jacen Burrows—none of which were intrusive, I might add. Mike and Jacen simply encouraged me to further explore some story details I had started. I'd tell you what they are, but it would blow the story for you.

"This entire process feels like a team effort and the guys are turning in career-making and mind-blowing art. They love these characters, too. Especially Jacen. ***Chainsaw*** is his favorite movie.

"As far as content? The body counts in each one-shot is very high and the deaths are elaborate. I did my research and didn't copy anything that's been done. And yeah, it is wall to wall action."

With all three horror icons appearing under the same imprint, is there any chance of a three-way battle royale? "Simply announcing that Freddy, Jason and Leatherface are coming to comics is crazy enough for one interview. Will these killers meet and greet in a mad, slice and dice of epic proportions? You will just have to wait and see."

Pulido is confident that horror fans will find just the sort of mayhem they're looking for in these titles. "It may be bold to say, but fans will get more of what they crave in the comics. It goes without saying that we need a compelling story, but horror has become so sanitized in the last few years. Everything is off-screen. There have been few murders that make you go 'whoa!'. I'm a big fan of Romero's ***Dawn of The Dead*** and that splatter era of horror where we get to see outrageous acts of violence. I was encouraged to take it over the top, so with the blessing of all involved, I proceeded to do so.... I'm offering up a blood-soaked love letter to the fans with these stories."

## Kunkel's Coming Attractions

What's *Mike Kunkel* been working on since wrapping up his initial ***Herobear and the Kid*** series and the Sokmunsters? Well, it appears that the ever-imaginative Kunkel has a new all-ages concept that he's ready to unveil: The Grommitts.

Just who are the Grommitts? they're Kid Fin, his sister Swirl, their robot Battery Boy, and their friend Frazz—and they'll soon be starring in their own comic book as well as being prominently featured in a merchandise line. "It's hard enough working with a Herobear and some Sokmunsters, but these darn Grommitts are into *everything*," Kunkel said. "They appeared innocently enough. But with their 'daddio this' and their 'hey, poppa, that', they quickly took over the entire studio." Numerous plans have already been made for the Grommitts. First and foremost, a mini-line of Grommitts merchandise from the Astonish Factory is in the works, along with a brand new forthcoming book: ***Grommitts: Philosophies for Life, Dude.***

No release date for ***The Grommitts*** has been set—but once it is, you'll hear about it in ***CSN***!

## Kara-ing On with Jeph Loeb

At the WizardWorld LA Superman panel, writer *Jeph Loeb* said that the first six issues of his and *Ian Churchill's* ***Supergirl*** series will center on Kara getting to know the other places and people of the DCU. The first issue will feature Kara meeting Power Girl which will clear up some issues involving her origin and tie in with *Geoff Johns'* initial Power Girl story in the new ***JSA: Classified*** series. Expect Kara to cross paths with the Teen Titans, the Outsiders and the JLA as well.

Loeb said the "rollercoaster ride" tone of the series is similar to ***Superman/Batman***, but kept stressing Kara is very different than Superman.

Asked why Kara chose to stay on Themyscira, Loeb responded out of the choices she had – staying with her twenty-nine-year-old cousin who she thought would be a baby, and the Fortress of Solitude where the dog hates her, Themyscira "sounded like a good deal".

Asked if Linda Lee or any other former Supergirls will show up in this series, Loeb said it's important to set the ground rules and learn who Kara is at the start of the series. He said he's a fan of *Peter David* and what he did with the character, and he may address it sometime in the series—but for now Supergirl needs to be simplified so that everyone would understand who she is.

Supergirl will return in ***Superman/Batman #19*** in April in an issue that Loeb describes as "***Supergirl #0***" prior to the debut of her ongoing series later this year.

## Marvel Newsbits WizardWorld LA

- In spite of reports online over the last few months to the contrary, there is no release date set for the final installments of *Kevin Smith's* ***Spider-Man/Black Cat*** series, although Marvel editor-in-chief *Joe Quesada* confirmed that the remaining issues of his ***Daredevil: Father*** series will see print in 2005.
- *Warren Ellis'* ***Ultimate*** miniseries trilogy will conclude with ***Ultimate Extinction,*** which will feature both the Ultimate Captain Marvel and the Ultimate Galactus in a cosmic drama.
- *J. Michael Straczynski* will be joined by artist *Essad Ribic* for a fully painted five-issue prestige-format ***Silver Surfer*** miniseries.
- *Neil Gaiman* is working on another Marvel project that will be announced in the next few months, but it's *not* a ***1602***-related project. There will be a ***1602*** followup miniseries, ***1602: The New World,*** but it will be produced by writer *Greg Pak* and artist *Greg Tocchini*.
- ***Ghost Rider*** will be relaunched under the Marvel Knights imprint, with *Garth Ennis & Clayton Crain* handling the creative honors.
- Could a Marvel Universe/Ultimate Marvel Universe crossover be in the works? When a member of the audience asked about rumors of just such a crossover event, *Joe Quesada* replied simply, "I think you've said too much" and went on to another topic.
- *Warren Ellis* has created a new team book for Marvel (stars and concept unknown as of yet, although Quesada said that it would star a mix of existing and new characters) that won't see print for another year, but when it does, Quesada promises that it's going to be "the next cool thing. I've got the first script, and this book is my new favorite project," Marvel's editor-in-chief added.
- Look for an ***X-Men/Black Panther*** crossover that will run through ***X-Men #s 175-176*** and ***Black Panther #s 8-9***.
- *Orson Scott Card's* ***Ultimate Iron Man*** limited series has grown from one six-part series to two five-part series, primarily because the award-winning writer "is having a blast" with the comic


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book, which offers a radical new take on the origin of the armored hero. "He was going to take the story to a certain point and then leave it to another writer," Quesada said, "but he was so thrilled with the purity of this vision that he wanted to take the story to the next step. Because he's decided to do more, he's going to slow down the pace of the story, go more into Tony Stark's childhood. Orson's having fun, and the book is selling like crazy".

•*Mike Carey & Jae Lee* are doing two fill-in issues of ***Ultimate Fantastic Four*** before the new creative team of *Mark Millar & Greg Land* take over in July.

•Kitty Pryde will graduate to her own solo miniseries, ***Kitty Pryde: Shadow & Flame***, by *Akira Yoshida & Paul Smith*.

•Ultimate Moon Knight will make an appearance in ***Ultimate Spider-Man*** this summer.

•*Juan Bobillo* will remain as penciller of ***She-Hulk*** when the series relaunches later this year.

•Northstar may be dead, but he's getting better, as Joe Quesada has confirmed that the hero who was done in by Wolverine a couple of months ago will return later this year.

•In the aftermath of a successful limited series, X-23 will join the line-up of ***New X-Men: Academy X,*** while *Craig Kyle, Chris Yost, & Billy Tan* are talking about doing more ***X-23*** limited series.

•After last December's successful fifth-week event, Marvel will revisit the ***What If?*** concept with another round of oneshots this December—and speaking of ***What If?***, the missing ***Wha' Huh?*** humor issue will reportedly see print at long last in August.

•Following the success of ***Shanna the She-Devil,*** *Frank Cho* is already working on a new project that Quesada described as "a very cool dream project—and it's got a girl in it!"

•Look for the Spider-Man titles to be more closely united in the next few months; an overall continuity for the next couple of years has been developed that will eliminate some of the many continuity contradictions that have concerned fans. And speaking of Spider-Man, *Mark Waid & Mike Wieringo* are working on a new Spider-Man title slated for fall release.

•*Paul Jenkins & John Romita Jr.* are working on a new ***Sentry*** eight-issue limited series starring the enigmatic member of the new Avengers. Jenkins, who created the character in the 2001-2001 limited series and specials, said that the new series will be set in present day pick up on threads began in ***New Avengers,*** and it is being set up in ***New Avengers #s 7-9.***

•*Paul Jenkins & Paolo Rivera* are working on a series of prestige-format specials entitled ***Mythos*** which will feature the origins of classic Marvel characters, blending the comic book versions in with the movie stories, with a little bit of Jenkins' own flavor mixed in as well; Jenkins said they would be written with great reverence to both media.

•*Dan Slott & Andrea DeVito* are working on a ***Thing*** solo series that spins out of *J. Michael Straczynski's* ***Fantastic Four.***

•*Joe Quesada* said that major changes are in store for the Marvel Universe as a result of the events of *Brian Bendis'* upcoming ***House of M*** limited series, which will "put some genies back in some bottles," according to Marvel's editor-in-chief. Look for a number of ***House of M*** tie-ins, beginning with ***Spider-Man: House of M*** in June, and continuing into ***Incredible Hulk #s 83-86*** by *Peter David & Jorge Lucas* and ***Iron Man: House of M*** by *Greg Pak & Pat Lee.*

•*Peter David* will write a new ongoing series for Marvel slated to debut later this year, as well as an ***Abomination*** limited series.

•*Paul Pelletier* is slated to take over as regular penciller on ***Exiles*** beginning this fall.

•*Frank Tieri & Bart Sears* launch ***Weapon X: Days of Future Now*** in July.

•*Kurt Busiek & Jay Anacleto's* ***Marvels: Eye of the Camera*** series is still in the works, with Anacleto wrapping up the art for the second issue, but Marvel doesn't plan on publishing any issues of the series until it's pretty much completed, so as to avoid the ***Secret War*** syndrome in which a series loses heat because of the lengthy delays between issues.

•*Mike Avon Oeming & Scott Kolins* are working on a ***Classic Thor*** six-issue limited series in the same vein as ***X-Men: Children of the Atom*** and ***Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes.*** "Thor and the Warriors Three journey to recover mystical objects, returning Thor to his classic roots," Oeming said about the series. "We'll see a fight with the Absorbing Man, good old Donald Blake and Jane Foster, and most of our Asgardian cast. This will be a great hold over for Thor fans between the ending of ***Beta Ray Bill*** and the relaunch of ***Thor.***"

## DC Newsbits—WizardWorld LA

•*Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray* will write a dark new ongoing monthly ***Jonah Hex*** series that is slated to debut late this summer. The first issue will have a cover by *Frank Quitely*. Each issue will feature a self-contained Western tale. Additionally, DC's *Bob Wayne* said that they're considering collections of classic ***Jonah Hex*** stories as well.

•Look for a Superman mega-story crossover event in July that will begin in ***Superman,*** continue into ***Action Comics*** and ***Adventures of Superman,*** and conclude in ***Wonder Woman.*** Brainiac, Darkseid, and Ruin will all play a part in the story, which will be written by *Mark Verheiden, Gail Simone, & Greg Rucka* (the regular writers for the four books). Afterwards, readers can expect to see more cohesiveness in the Superman titles so that it seems like the same Superman is appearing in all three titles.

•The *Frank Miller-Jim Lee* run on ***All-Star Batman*** will run longer than the initially rumored six issues, editor *Eddie Berganza* said.

•Editor *Eddie Berganza* said that the ***Outsiders/Teen Titans*** crossover "The Insiders" will clear up the questions about Superboy's origin .. questions that arose when he learned half of his DNA came from Lex Luthor.

•***Superman*** writer *Mark Verheiden* plans on exploring Connor's relationship with Clark in Superman, in a storyline where they both visit the Kent farm.

•***Adventures of Superman*** writer *Greg Rucka* said that he would like to "try to do right by Lana" and fix the problems surrounding the character in the near future.

•Writer *Bill Willingham* said lot of characters people haven't seen in a while will appear in his six-issue limited series ***Day of Vengeance,*** including Ragman, Blue Devil, Nightshade, and Night Master. And the Phantom Stranger makes an appearance. Willingham also revealed the series introduces a new team to the DCU whose intelligence officer is Detective Chimp. (At that point, *Grant Morrison* jokingly chimed in, "Oh, *that* sold it to people", to which Willingham replied, "Anything is improved upon when you put a talking monkey in it")

•Talking about ***The OMAC Project,*** writer *Greg Rucka* said, "It is beautiful and paranoid and has Batman, so you can't go wrong." ***The OMAC Project #1*** starts thirty seconds before the end of ***Countdown.***

•Writer *Gail Simone* said ***Villains United*** is all about the bad guys. "It has sex, violence ,and Poison, so what else can you ask for?" she inquired rhetorically. Simone explained that all the villains of the DCU band together but six hold out, including Deadshot, Cheshire and a revamped Catman.

•The third ***Teen Titans Go!*** digest is scheduled for July.

•*Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray* said upcoming ***Hawkman*** stories center on old Golden and Silver Age Hawkman rogues members coming back with a mystery agenda, leading up to issue #45, when the book is "changed forever."

•*Marc Andreyko* said that all of the various DCU Manhunters from over the years will appear in the upcoming "Manhunted" storyline in ***Manhunter***—and that some will stick around afterwards and that some will not. Andreyko also said that a trade paperback collecting the first five-issue arc will be published in September or October.

•*Geoff Johns & Allan Heinberg's* 5-part story spinning out of ***Identity Crisis*** begins in ***JLA #115,*** dealing with what was revealed to have happened to Batman. Heinberg said there are several unresolved issues that as fans he and Johns wanted to explore, so they're picking up on some of the threads *Brad Meltzer* left.

•*Geoff Johns'* new series ***JSA Classified*** which spins out of ***JSA #75,*** begins with a three-part Power Girl storyline illustrated by *Amanda Conner & Jimmy Palmiotti*. The story will explore Power Girl's origin.

•***Justice,*** the upcoming Justice League series co-written by *Alex Ross & Jim Krueger,* penciled by *Doug Braithwaite,* and painted by Ross, will debut in December as a bi-monthly series.

•*Mark Waid* said that there have been some talks with DC regarding the possibility of his writing one or more ***Flash*** projects in the future, but nothing had been firmed up yet.

•*Greg Rucka* said that there are further plans for the Question after the completion of the *Rick Veitch-Tommy Lee Edwards* limited series.

•*Grant Morrison* said that the New Gods will appear in the ***Mr. Miracle*** chapter of ***Seven Soldier***—but he said they will be changed. In the storyline, Darkseid has won and has cast the New Gods down to Earth, so new versions of familiar characters will show up. For example, Orion will be a broken-down boxer.

## WildStorm•Vertigo Newsbits WizardWorld LA

•*Brian Azzarello & Marcelo Frusin's* upcoming new ongoing Western series ***Loveless*** is now set to debut later this year.

•Writer *Bill Willingham* said there are more ***Fables*** side projects in the vein of ***The Last Castle*** in the works.

•Asked if the Vertigo line would be expanding, Jonathan Vankin said Vertigo is looking to push the envelope to find and reach out to readers who might not necessarily attend comics conventions or even currently read comics. In that vein, fans will continue to see more genre-type projects coming from the imprint, but also lots of "high-quality, non-genre," projects with "wide appeal", such as the new *Harvey Pekar* original graphic novel.

•WildStorm's *Ben Abernathy* said there are more Signature projects coming from WildStorm as well as more projects set in the Wildstorm Universe, and they are looking forward to seeing the Universe move back to the forefront of comic book universes. Abernathy hinted that they were working towards the relaunch of ***Wildcats, Gen-13*** and others—including ***The Authority,*** once the current ***Authority: Revolution*** series concludes.

•*Jill Thompson's* second original manga story, ***Dead Boy Detectives,*** debuts in July. A mystery spinning out of ***The Sandman: Season Of Mists,*** it's about Edwin Paine and Charles Rowland, two dead British teens running a makeshift detective agency who travel across the pond to the States. The graphic novel guest-stars the ever-popular Death.

•*Alex Sinclair* said *Mike Carey & Whilce Portacio* are still working together, trying to get to the point where they can put ***Wetworks*** back on the schedule.

•***The WinterMen,*** a Vertigo project by *Brett Lewis & John Paul Leon* that was originally announced a few years ago, is now slated for release from WildStorm this summer. ***The WinterMen*** tells the tale of fallen Russian super-soldiers and what happened to them after the Soviet Union crumbled.

•***Wraithborn,*** a new six-issue limited series written by *Marcia Chen* with art by *Joe Benitez & Joe Weems,* is slated for September release. A supernatural action-adventure, the story is about the Wraithborn, wielders of a mysterious power who defend humanity from supernatural beings called Wraiths. ***Wraithborn*** stars Valin, a young man who trained his whole life to be a Wraithborn, only to find that his powers have been given to a timid teenage girl named Melanie who doesn't know how to be a hero and doesn't necessarily want to be one. A powerless Valin is now forced to protect the super-powered Melanie from the Wraiths.

# CAT WOMAN™ #44

# She'll do ANYTHING

# Even make a deal with

The One You Love part one
I just hang on and concentrate on one small piece of real estate...
...my beloved East End.
The world.
It's a crazy place.
You've got flying people, monsters, aliens...
...cities under the sea, people on the moon...
I'm not sure how Grace does it.
He manages to keep a level head about stuff like that, but that's how he is.
Me?
I've got my own way of staying sane in this crazy world...
BET SHE'LL MAKE ME!
Not sure who this guy is. I think he might've fought the Flash a couple of years ago, but I could be wrong. Maybe he's just some new jerk.
KAPOOM
DAMN IT! YOU'RE SCREWIN' UP MY PLAN!
KAPOOM
KAPOOM
Nope. He's a thief.
SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL G.C.P.D.
Like me.
Well, not like me...
...I'm good.
JUST TAKING A PEEK INSIDE.
WILL PFEIFER writer
PETE WOODS artist
BRAD ANDERSON colorist
editor MATT IDELSON editor

the NEW creative team

*Written by* WIZARD *"on the rise" creator*

**WILL PFEIFER**

*Featuring the stunning art of*

**PETE WOODS**

*Covers by comics superstar*

**ADAM HUGHES**

Acclaimed writer Will Pfeifer
artist Pete Woods (DETECTIVE
Hughes (WONDER WOMAN,
feline fatale in an explosive new

While trying to determine w
by Black Mask following "War G
with a tempting offer from none
what it seems, and she may bring

# to defend her piece of Gotham...
# a devil named HUSH.

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! SO YOU WANT SOME TROUBLE? FOR TROUBLE AS WELL-I'M GONNA GIVE YOU SOME TROUBLE!
Whoever he is, he didn't build this suit.
HOW YOU LIKE THAT? HUH? HOW YOU LIKE THAT?
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY FACE?!
PLINK
AND SEEING WHAT MAKES IT TICK.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOUR ARM, YOU WEAKLING?
WE'RE GOING CRASH!
NO...
...WE'RE NOT!
NOW...
LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.
UHRR! I THINK MY ARM'S BROKEN!
I DOUBT IT. THAT BODY ARMOR YOU'RE WEARING ABSORBED MOST OF THE IMPACT.
IF YOU DID BREAK IT, THERE ARE SEVERAL FINE EMERGENCY ROOMS IN THE GREATER-GOTHAM AREA...
JUST MAKE SURE YOU CHOOSE ONE THAT'S NOT IN THE EAST END.
N-WHUH...?
OR, NEXT TIME IT WON'T BE YOUR LEFT ARM THOSE CLAWS OPEN UP.
IT'LL BE YOU.
FROM NOW ON, PUNCH YOU STAY FAR AWAY FROM HERE.
GOT IT?
G-GURK! WHATEVER YOU...
NO.
NO! NOW!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
NO! THERE.
HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD! HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD!

(HERO, SWAMP THING, AQUAMAN), COMICS, ROBIN) and cover artist Adam ROSE & THORN) come aboard to steer the direction!

Why the East End has remained unaffected ames," Catwoman finds herself presented other than Hush! But her mission isn't about death on a massive scale!

Comic Shop Locator Service: 1-888-COMIC BOOK or dccomics.com

Don't miss the debut of the new creative team, premiering in issue #44 – On Sale in June

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# Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by ***Comic Shop News*** in cooperation with *Matt Brady* and *newsarama.com*

## At Your Service

Apparently Victoria has more than one secret! Queen Victoria, that is—and it's her secret service that's the focus of a new series from *Darren G. Davis*, creator of ***The Legend of Isis*** and ***The Tenth Muse***, and *Brooklyn Weaver*.

***Victoria's Secret Service***, slated to debut later this year from Alias, is the story of a young American woman who finds out she's been selected to join an elite, clandestine organization which was originally formed by Queen Victoria during her reign over the English Empire—and organization that exists today as a covert international operation.

Even before ***Victoria's Secret Service #1*** has seen print, the series has already been optioned for film by producer *Jeannie Bendel*. Additionally, Shocker Toys has licensed the series for development as an action figure line.

"This has all been very exciting for me," said Davis. "Brooklyn has played a big part in helping us option ***Isis*** and ***Tenth Muse*** to film studios, and now it's really great that he and I can do something like this together. We're both looking forward to the comic, film, and toys, and we hope to see even more announcements like this one in the near future."

Look for ***Victoria's Secret Service #1*** in September.

## Red Suns and All-Stars

At March's WizardWorld LA, *Grant Morrison* offered more insight into the take on the Man of Steel that he and *Frank Quitely* will present in the upcoming ***All-Star Superman*** series. Morrison told fans that his primary goal with the book was to tell a Superman story that everyone can get behind, a story that includes all the iconic elements that the public associates with the Superman mythos; he's trying to capture the feel of the animated series, with is non-reliance on any one particular continuity.

While this series is set in contemporary times, it presents a Lois Lane and Clark Kent who are not married or engaged. And in ***All-Star Superman,*** the Man of Steel was Superboy in his youth—no clones, no DNA experiments, no simultaneous Superman and Superboy. Morrison also explained that he's going to play with the fun elements of the Superman mythos from different eras spanning different continuities, including his own—Solaris the Tyrant Sun from Morrison's ***DC One Million*** will appear in the series.

His idea of the title is that he's telling the folktales of Superman … the stories highlighting the parts of the Superman mythos people will remember in a hundred or five hundred years. But he also wants to find new things in the characters as well. In a pure Morrison moment the writer said he's wants to look at Lex Luthor and understand him in a different way that make readers understand, "Why Luthor draws Superman's eyebrows on his own face."

Each issue of ***All-Star Superman*** will be self-contained. The second issue features a Lois story; the third issue is a Jimmy Olsen story; and the fourth will be a Bizarro story. This will be a new take on Bizarro in which anyone who touches Bizarro becomes a Bizarro. ***All-Star Superman #5*** will probably be a Superboy story. Morrison described the cover as Superboy and his dog looking down on a gravestone saying, "My father is dead and it's all my fault"—a clear homage to those classic Weisinger gimmick covers from the Silver Age.

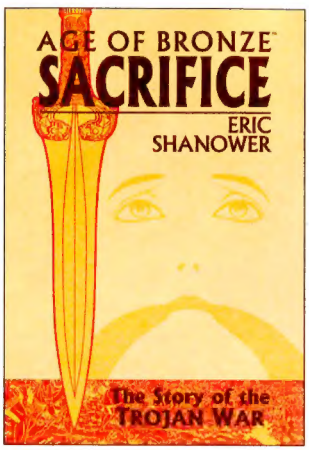
*Frank Quitely* has started illustrating the series, and Morrison says his work has a *Neal Adams* quality to it, particularly citing a scene of Superman flying over the surface of the sun in the first issue.

Morrison and Quitely's run on ***All-Star Superman*** will last at least twelve issues; Morrison joked that twelve issues are all Quitely can handle before his head explodes. Morrison added that he'd like to do more, though, and he has come up with another eight stories.

Asked by Berganza if the Legion of Superheroes will show up in the title, Morrison replied, "Well, now that you mention it..."

## Coming Comics
## Image in June

*Eric Shanower* continues his retelling of ***The Iliad*** in ***Age of Bronze #20,*** which kicks off a new story arc, "Betrayal." Nothing can stop Agamemnon and the army from reaching Troy – or from destroying anyone in their way. The great warrior Achilles leads a bloody assault on the island of Tenedos and makes a grave mistake that leads him closer to his foretold doom.




The ***Avigon*** story is fully told in ***Avigon: Gods & Demons,*** a 192-page compilation by *Che Gilson & Jimmie Robinson*. This book includes the original Avigon novella—but that's not even half of the story. The book includes more than a hundred pages of never-before-seen Avigon material chronicling the efforts of the robotic heroine to escape from her mechanical world ruled by political clockwork masters. But can she hide in a surreal world of machines where she herself is one?

G-Force rides again in ***Battle of the Planets: Endgame #1,*** the kickoff issue of a two-part story by *Munier Sharrieff & Wilson Tortosa*. Sharrieff returns to revisit the G-Force crew, picking up right where he left off in Top Cow's smash-hit original ***Battle of the Planets*** series. Who was the mysterious force seen in the original series? What new peril will he be putting the team into? And how will it result in G-Force battling…itself? All will be revealed here!

*Robert Kirkman's* first published work returns under the Image "i" this summer as ***Battle Pope #1*** sees print in full color for the first time. Illustrated by *Tony Moore*, this religious spoof takes place after the Rapture, when the sole protector of the sinning masses is Battle Pope and his trusty sidekick Jesus. Did we mention that you need to have a *very* tolerant attitude to fully appreciate this book?...

*Jim Valentino, Scott Wherle, John Toledo, & Marc Deering* brighten up Image's summer schedule with ***Blacklight,*** a new Valentino-created series. Lina Juarez is stuck in a dead-end job and a dead-end relationship, living a dead-end life in a dead-end town. All she dreams of is an escape, some kind of excitement in her life. But when a dark and mysterious power possesses her, she quickly learns the true meaning of the old adage, "Be careful what you wish for."

Zoe Nixon is a cute, bored, lonely file clerk. She wants a new life and fate gives her that chance when she finds her true calling: hunting for bounties in the lawless dimension known as the O.D.! See her in action in ***Flak Riot #1*** by writer/artist *Michael O'Hare*, with an assist from *Robert Place Napton, & Michael Garcia*.

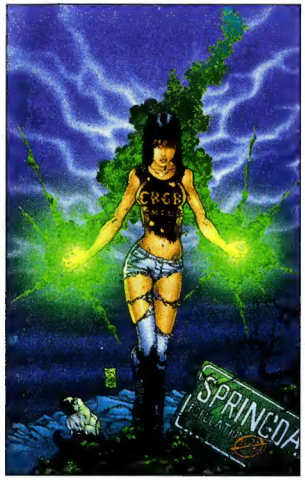
*Joe Casey & Tom Scioli* venture into the cosmic with ***Godland #1.*** Adam Archer is Earth's star-powered champion. But what does his existence mean for the rest of humanity? And how long until the rest of the universe takes notice? Mind-altering aliens! Surreal super-villains! We're talking real Starlin territory here!

Want to bring yourself up to speed on *Robert Kirkman's* ***Invincible***—or perhaps you'd like to add a deluxe collection of the series to your library? Then ***Invincible: The Ultimate Collection Volume One*** is for you! This four hundred page hardcover features the first thirteen issues of the Eisner-nominated series, along with all the bonus materials from the first three trade paperbacks and more!

The Image teen superhero crossover continues in ***The Pact #3*** by *Phil Hester, Carlos Rodriguez, & Lluc Banos*. Who is Quantum Girl and why is she leading The Pact? Her mysterious, time-bending powers send our young heroes spiraling into split timelines and alternate universes, each more dire than the last, but are any of them prepared for the sacrifice it will take to put things right? Find out in "The Life and Death of Quantum Girl"!

*Jason Rand & Juan Ferreyra* bring Owen Young and Bobby Pope face to face in the interrogation room... but what ulterior purpose has truly brought these men together? Find out in the full-color ***Small Gods Special #1.***

Ten years after the Rapture, the Earth is unprotected by God, and the demonic citizens of hell have flooded our world, enslaving the remaining human population. After saving the life of a runt demon named Bloato, bartender, occultist, and adventurer Bethany Black discovers that God is soon returning to wipe the Earth clean of everything unholy. With the end of the world coming, Bethany and Bloato set out to find the last doorway left into heaven and plead for admission. See if they make it in *Rick Remender & Eric Nguyen's* ***Strange Girl #1.***




The Tenth's origin is revealed in ***The Tenth: Darkk Dawn*** by *James Bonny, Tony Daniel, Tyler Kirkham, & Matt Banning*. This double-sized stand-alone story reveals the mysteries of the Tenth at long last. Join Espy, Zorina, and Victor as their lives are forever changed by the sinister experiments of Rhazes Darkk. Not only their future, but the future of humanity will hang in the balance.

After five years of preparation, *Dan Jurgens & Joe Jusko* have at last completed their ***Tomb Raider: The Greatest Treasure of All,*** and the folks at Top Cow assure us that it's worth the wait! Lara thought she had recovered the most precious items history had to offer…until now. Hop on for Lara's most unique adventure ever as she treks through the jungle of death to experience the unreal.

***Top Cow Triple Play*** offers a look at three all-new Top Cow series—and you don't even have to pay a buck for the privilege! This 99¢ comic offers six-page previews of ***Freshmen,*** a superheroes-in-college series by ***Austin Powers'*** *Seth Green* with *Hugh Sterbakov, & Leonard Kirk;* ***VICE,*** a gritty FBI superteam series by ***Crossing Jordan*** writer *Aron Coleite* and artist *Tyler Kirkham; and* ***Necromancer,*** a mystical-heroine-in-training series by novelist *Joshua Ortega* and artist *Francis Manapul*.

***Monster War*** continues in *Chris Golden, Tom Sniegoski, & Joyce Chin's* ***Witchblade Vs. Frankenstein's Monster: Monster War #3.*** Investigating a series of savage murders at a New York City brothel, Witchblade-bearer Sara Pezzini finds herself face-to-face with the legendary monster of Frankenstein! It's supernatural weaponry vs. an immortal creature cobbled together from the pieces of the dead in a battle royal! Plus, Tomb Raider Lara Croft and Dr. Jekyll come to the city in pursuit of the Magdalena who is searching for her new lord and master…Dracula.

Image collected editions for June include:

•***Age of Bronze Volume Two: Sacrifice,*** a trade paperback compilation of *Eric Shanower's* ***Age of Bronze #s 10-19;***

•***The Amazing Joy Buzzards,*** collecting the limited series by *Mark Smith & Dan Hipp;*

•***The Nameless: The Director's Cut,*** a 128-page compilation of the five-issue series by *Joe Pruett, Phil Hester, & Bruce McCorkindale* with new pages and scenes cut from the original version, plus loads of new extra material and a behind the scenes look at the creating of this modern horror story; and

•***The Ride Volume One,*** collecting five stories centered around a 1968 Camaro and the lives that it alters.

# The Games People Play

BY BRETT BROOKS WITH WARD BATTY

## GAMA Tidbits

Oodles of news came from the recent GAMA Trade Show—and here are the highlights!

•*Joss Whedon's* upcoming movie ***Serenity,*** based on the television series ***Firefly,*** is being turned into a role-playing game from *Margaret Weis* Productions in August. ***The Serenity Role-Playing Game*** will focus primarily on material from the feature film, and not the television series.

•Late this year, Comic Images will release the ***Godzilla Collectible Card Game,*** using images from the famous lizard's 29 movies.

•Not stopping there, Comic Images will also release the ***Conan Collectible Card Game*** towards the end of the year, using images from the recent Dark Horse comic series.

•Days of Wonder gave ***CSN*** an advance chance to play a prototype for their upcoming game, ***Shadows Over Camelot.*** This is a cooperative game with a twist. Loyalty cards are dealt out at the beginning and there may be a traitor among the players. The traitor has a different winning condition than the rest of the players, so it is good to discover the traitor's identity. It is also possible there is no traitor at all. Keep a careful eye on the actions of the fellow players and accuse wisely. The game will be available in shops in May.

•Palladium will be releasing a new version of the ***Rifts*** role-playing game, tentatively titled ***Ultimate Rifts,*** in August.

•A fourth edition of the ***Shadowrun RPG*** is scheduled for release in August from Fantasy Productions.

•Score will release a new TCG based on the ***Case Closed*** anime in June, using the material from the uncut television episodes.

•The latest "alternate player's handbook" from the mind of *Monte Cook* is called ***Iron Lore.*** White Wolf will release the $37.99 hardcover, which focuses on action, and is written by *Mike Mearls*.

•Due to slower than expected sales, the ***G.I. Joe CCG*** from Wizards of the Coast has officially been cancelled.

•A tenth anniversary edition of the ***Settlers of Catan*** game will be released featuring 3-D components. Appropriately enough, the game will get title ***The Tenth Anniversary Settlers of Catan 3-D Special Edition Chest Set.***

•JoyRide Entertainment has acquired the rights to produce a collectible card game based on the anime ***Full Metal Alchemist,*** with plans to release it in August.

•West End is producing a ***D6*** version of the ***Prime Directive RPG*** for Amarillo Design Bureau, providing something of a new ***Star Trek*** RPG for the market.

•Fantasy Flight has a very dynamic looking new ***Marvel Super Heroes Boardgame*** scheduled for release this fall.

•Kenzer & Company has two new games on the schedule. ***Space Race*** is a light-hearted race through space, with a constructible quality to add variation. ***Tech Support*** pokes fun at the trials and tribulations of having to deal with phone support when your computer breaks down. Both games are planned for an August release.

•Rio Grande Games signed a distribution deal with German publisher Queen Games. Queen will produce editions that will include English on the box and rules. This deal will apply to all new Queen releases as well as some older titles like ***Alhambra*** and ***Metro***. The ***Alhambra*** expansions and the ***Gardens of Alhambra*** will also be available in English.

•Paizo Publications, the people behind ***Dungeon*** and ***Dragon*** magazines, will be releasing two hardcover books this year. ***The Shackled City*** adventure collects and expands the module that was originally published in ***Dungeon;*** the 416-page book will carry the suggested retail of $59.99. They will also release ***The Dragon Compendium: Volume One,*** collecting some of the best articles from the magazines 29-year run.

•Margaret Weis Productions will release a new version of ***Tom Wham's Dancing Dragons*** card game in June.

•A stand-alone card game based on the ***Paranoia*** role-playing game is in the works. It is expected to be out in August.

## Two New WizReleases

WizKidsm famous for their clix line of miniatures, continues to venture into new territory with its pop-out plastic-assembly games that launched with ***Pirates of the Spanish Main.*** Later this year, they'll offer new products in both lines—one an expansion of an existing game system, the other an all-new game.

Using the same constructible concept as the hit ***Pirates of the Spanish Main*** game, the all-new ***Rocketmen: Axis of Evil*** game harkens back to the days of pulp adventure of the 1940's.

The game has players constructing spaceships that can be modified to fit your own designs, as players try to defeat your opponent in a battle among an asteroid field. Players will get to choose between several races that are represented in the game, including Rebels, Venusians, The Legion of Terra, and the all-female Mercurians.

To set the stage for the game, eight weeks prior to release, WizKids will air exclusive ***Rocketmen*** cartoon episodes on their web site, each featuring the appropriate cliffhanger ending.

The rules for ***Rocketmen: Axis of Evil*** are more complicated than those used in ***Pirates,*** and that—combined with the theme of the game—has WizKids targeting ***Rocketmen*** for a slightly older market. You can look for the ***Rocketmen*** game to hit stores in August.

New for the ***DC HeroClix*** line is ***Icons***. True to its name, this new sixty-figure set brings the iconic figures of the DC universe to the forefront, including such well known characters as Superman, Batman, and the Teen Titans. What's more, the nature of this set serves as a great jumping-on point for new players. ***The DC HeroClix Icons Start Set*** will include six characters that will only be found in the starters, complete rules, tokens, a map, and dice for the suggested retail price of $12.99. ***The DC HeroClix Icons Booster Packs*** will contain two randomly sorted figures for the suggested retail price of $3.99.

## City Of Heroes Goes For Two

The hit ***City of Heroes*** online computer role-playing game is moving away from the laptop and onto the tabletop with two new releases from two different publishers.

Eden Studios has acquired the rights to produce a role-playing game based on ***City of Heroes.*** "We are very excited about getting the opportunity to produce this super-powered game," George Vasilakos, President of Eden Studios, announced. "We worked with Jack Emmert, ***City of Heroes*** lead designer, on our first roleplaying game, ***Conspiracy X.*** His imagination and storytelling have always been tremendous. He and his ***City of Heroes*** team have created a rocking good game that has been chewing up most of our free time for over a year now. We plan to translate that experience to the table-top while adding the richness of face-to-face roleplaying."

The new role-playing game will use a variation on the Unisystem rules, created by *C.J. Carella*, making it compatible with the other games produced by Eden Studios. The game will include many of the powers, settings, and villains that are introduced in the computer game, including the Circle of Thorns mages, Clockwork Robots, Vahsilok Zombies, and many others.

The first release for the ***City of Heroes RPG*** will be ***The Registration Manual*** core book, which will be followed by ***The Paragon City Sourcebook,*** the ***Monitor's Support Pack,*** and ***The Super-Powered Operatives Dossier.***

If you are looking for something a little more card-based, then you will want to keep an eye open for Alderac Entertainment's ***City of Heroes CCG.***

The new collectible card game is scheduled to hit stores in November, with the release of ***City of Heroes CG: Arena.*** The game will be designed by David Williams, and will feature original art from Top Cow studios. Look for more information from ***CSN*** as it becomes available.

## VTES Gets Support

Just when you thought that it was dead, it rises from the grave to haunt the night. ***Vampire: The Eternal Struggle*** will see two major releases from White Wolf this year.

In August, White Wolf will release ***The Vampire: The Eternal Struggle Player's Guide.*** This massive new resource manual will include images of the entire line of cards, sample decks to construct, and strategy tips by two of the world's top players. ***The Vampire: The Eternal Struggle Player's Guide*** will be out in August for $34.99.

Then in November, White Wolf releases ***Legacies of the Blood.*** This expansion focuses on the smaller clans and bloodlines, including the African sub-sects that were introduced in the ***Ebony Kingdoms*** book.

There will be four new ninety-card starter decks, including an ***Ebony Kingdoms*** starter aimed at new players. The four starter decks will carry the suggested retail price of $9.99 each, while the 11-card booster packs will retail at $2.99 each.

## Song of Ice and Testors

*George R.R. Martin's* extremely popular ***Song of Ice and Fire*** series has already inspired a board game and a role-playing game, but there is apparently plenty of space left for more gaming opportunities. The Testors Corporation has announced that they will produce pre-painted miniatures, signature pieces, and a miniatures game based on the novels.

The first thing to hit stores will be the pre-painted 1:18 scale miniatures, due out in September. That will be followed up by the 54mm ***Signature Series*** line of miniatures in January of 2006, and finally the miniatures game which will be out sometime in the summer of 2006. The miniatures game is being designed by Andy Chambers. Keep looking to ***CSN*** for more information as it becomes available.

## Hecatomb Redesigns CCGs

With the plethora of collectible card games on the market that are based on children's shows or aimed at a young audience, Wizards of the Coast has decided to provide a clear alternate. ***Hecatomb*** is the new CCG from WOTC that has a new look and feel for long time fans of the card game market.

Aimed at a target audience of fifteen and up, ***Hecatomb*** is a game where the players are trying to destroy the world using horrific monsters of their own design. Players create these Abominations, as they are called in the game, by stacking up to five cards together to create a unique design.

One very unique quality of ***Hecatomb*** is the design of the cards themselves. The cards have a unique five-sided shape, and are made from plastic to make them extremely durable.

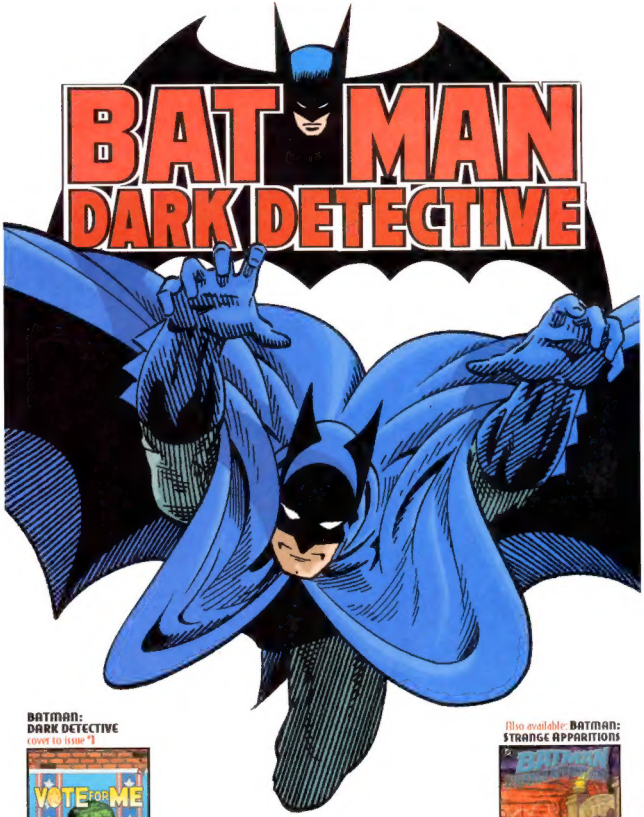
In-game design has a top limit of forty cards per deck, with a minimum size of twenty, making the deck construction much smaller than the typical game. The initial set of 144-cards due out in August, with a two player starter of two 20-card fixed decks at the suggested retail price of $12.99. There will also be thirteen-card booster packs available for the suggested price of $4.99 each. The first expansion for ***Hecatomb*** is scheduled for a Halloween release, also containing 144 cards.

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR CREATIVE TEAMS EVER TO TACKLE THE DARK KNIGHT IS BACK...

**STEVE ENGLEHART • MARSHALL ROGERS • TERRY AUSTIN**

...AND BETTER THAN BEFORE!

# BATMAN DARK DETECTIVE



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cover to issue #3

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